

Loveland Boy Leaves Straight, Placed In Custody Of His Mother

BY JIM ROHRER
Batavia Bureau Chief

MILFORD—A 14-year-old Loveland boy who either escaped or was pirated out of a foster home connected with the Straight, Inc. drug rehabilitation center was reunited with his mother Tuesday.

Although attorneys on both sides of a hearing in Warren County Domestic Relations Court agreed not to talk about the case to the press, it was learned that Patricia Wynne of Maineville has obtained at least temporary custody of her son. The boy has been removed from the Straight program.

Mrs. Wynne is divorced from the boy's father, Walter J. Wynne of Loveland.

IN ADDITION, Wynne agreed to drop charges of child stealing against his former wife, for either taking the son from the foster home or arranging to have him taken from the home. Although Mrs. Wynne originally had custody of the son, custody was switched to the father in April after the

youth declared he wanted to live with his father.

Tuesday's agreement, which was made between attorneys and not by the court, included a stipulation that an \$80,000 lawsuit filed against Wynne and Straight Inc. by Mrs. Wynne will be dropped.

That lawsuit was filed after a July 1 incident at the Warren County Courthouse when Mrs. Wynne claimed employees of Straight assaulted her, injuring her face and arm. The incident occurred during filing of a deposition in the case, when she tried to see her son. She had not seen her son since May, when he was enrolled in the drug rehabilitation program.

WHAT MAY not be stopped is an expected investigation of the Straight program by the Ohio Department of Public Welfare, the result of a letter Mrs. Wynne's attorney, Jeanne Hash, wrote to state officials claiming the Straight program violates the rights of its clients and subjects, them to abusive techniques.

An earlier investigation of Straight, by the Ohio Department of Drug Abuse, cleared the agency of any wrongdoing in other cases where complaints were received.

Straight, a private Florida-based organization, tries to rid clients of drug dependencies through the use of peer pressure and family involvement. The Milford center opened in December.

Prior to the agreement by both sides not to talk about the case, Mrs. Wynne said her son "escaped" Saturday night from the Straight foster home.

"I WROTE to the Loveland police Sunday to let them know my son was with me and he was safe and happy," she said. "This is the first chance I had to see or talk to my son since May. I spent the day with him Sunday, and believe me, he needed the sun. He had been an active boy before he went into Straight, but he had been closed

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up in rooms, for so long his muscles were weak."

Mrs. Wynne said her son had been unhappy in Straight and wanted to return to his mother. She said her son was in no way drug dependent or even involved in drugs.

"I was talked into this Straight thing at first," she admitted. "But Straight lied to me. There was no real counseling, and they prevented me from having any contact with him. When I finally saw him Sunday, he told me he was afraid of the people in Straight."

Ed Stach, director of the Straight program in Milford, said Tuesday terms of the agreement did not allow him to talk about the Wynne case, but he said his agency has nothing to hide.

"PEOPLE NEED to know that drug and alcohol dependency among teen-agers is a life-and-death issue," Stach said. "The program is not for everybody. But I can assure you that when we take these kids in, there aren't any kids getting through who aren't chemically dependent. These kids

can't con our people, because our people have been down that drug road themselves, and they know every con in the book."

If a client was found not to be chemically dependent, Stach said, he would be terminated from the program.

"There are going to be kids, and parents, who resist the program," he said. "The very nature of these troubled family situations will lead to this sort of thing. We often deal with hysterical people."

Mrs. Wynne said her son "just wants to get away from Straight, and just wants to go back to school. They took him out of school when he went in the program."

The youth had been suspended more than once from Loveland High School, but Mrs. Wynne said the suspensions were for smoking cigarettes.

THE BOY'S father has since remarried, and Patricia Wynne said she believed her son ran into trouble with his father because the youth could not get along with his stepmother.

Stach said there are currently about 140 clients in the Straight program.